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GLEANINGS FROM THE ARABIC.

[Pt 1]

BY

H. W. FREELAND, M.A., M.R.A.S.,

Commander of the Order of the Crown of Siam.

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GLEANINGS FROM THE ARABIC.

By H. W. Freeland, M.A., M.R.A.S.
COMMANDER OF THE ORDER OF THE CROWN OF SIAM.

قَالَ بَعْضُ ٱلشُّعَرَآءِ فِي ٱلْحِلْمِ

إِذَا مَا أَخِي يَوْمًا تَوَلَّى بِوُدِّهِ   وَأَنْكَرْتُ مِنْهُ بَعْضَ مَا كُنْتُ أَعْرِفُ
عَطَفْتُ عَلَيْهِ بِٱلْمَوَدَّةِ إِنَّنِي   عَلَى مُذْنِبِ ٱلْإِخْوَانِ بِٱلْبِرِّ أَعْطِفُ
وَلَسْتُ أُجَازِيهِ قَبِيحَ ٱلَّذِى أَتَى   وَلَا رَاكِبًا مِنْهُ ٱلَّذِي يَتَخَوَّفُ
وَإِنْ عَوْرَةٌ مِنْهُ بَدَتْ لِي فَإِنَّنِي   سَأَصْفَحُ عَنْهَا مُجْمِلًا ثُمَّ أَصْدِفُ
وَإِغْضَاؤُكَ ٱلْعَيْنَيْنِ عَنْ عَيْبِ صَاحِبٍ   لَعَمْرُكَ أَبْقَى لِلْإِخَاءِ وَأَشْرَفُ

The Gentle Friend.[1]

If I faults in friend discover,
  Find him not in acts the same,
I, by friendship moved, pass over
  What in him provoketh blame.
What a friend of evil doeth
  I to him will never do;
Fault which unto him accrueth
  I with grace indulgent view.
To a friend's defects the blindness
  Of a friend is friendship's part,
Friendship this preserves through kindness
  Worthy of a noble heart.

[1] From an anonymous Arabic poem.—*Kosegarten*, p. 153.

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To a Tomb.

و قِيلَ فِي قَبْرٍ

يَا قَبْرُ يَا قَبْرُ هَلْ زَالَتْ مَحَاسِنُهُ
أَمْ قَدْ تَغَيَّرَ ذَاكَ الْمَنْظَرُ النَّضِرُ
يَا قَبْرُ مَا أَنْتَ لَا رَوْضٌ وَلَا فَلَكٌ
فَكَيْفَ يُجْمَعُ فِيكَ الْغُصْنُ وَالْقَمَرُ

Translation.

O Tomb, hath beauty vanished from his brow ?
Form young and fair, and hath it changed so soon ?
Nor dewy mead, nor spangled vault art thou,
Yet covetest fair branch and radiant moon !

Latine redditum.

O tumule ! ingenuam frontem lux alma reliquit ?
Deserit heu ! nati mollia membra decus !
Non sunt prata tibi, neque cœlum aut lumina cœli—
Fulgentem lunam tu salicemque cupis ?

Auf Deutsch.

Du Grab, sind seine Blüthezeit und Jugend schon verschwunden,
Erbleicht die liebliche Gestalt in schweren Todes stunden ?
Die Pracht des Himmels kannst du nicht, der Wies' auch nicht entfalten,
Willst gierig doch den Mondenglanz den grünen Zweig behalten.

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Ἐν τῇ Ἑλληνικῇ γλώσσῃ.

Ἆρ' οὖν τύμβε κάκιστ', ὑπὸ χώματι νηλεοποίνῳ
  Κάλλος ἔφυρε φίλον καὶ νεότητα κόνις.
Οὐρανὸς οὔ σοὶ ἔνεστ' οὐ λειμών· πῶς σὺ σελήνην
  Λαμπροτάτην, καὶ πῶς τὸν καλὸν ὄζον ἔχεις;

En Français.

Ses attraits et son front rayonnant et serein
Gisent-ils engloutis, O Tombeau, dans ton sein ?
Tu n'as pas le beau pré, la voûte lumineuse,
Veux-tu donc le rameau, la lune radieuse ?

Tradotto in lingua Italiana.

Ahi tomba ! Ahi ! sono, sotto il triste velo,
  Il suo sorriso e la beltà svaniti ;
Non sei tu il prato od il ridente cielo ;
  Son in te il ramo e l' alma luna uniti ?

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قَالَ بَعْضُ ٱلْقُرَشِيِّينَ

بَيْنَمَا نَحْنُ بِٱلْبَلَاكِثِ فَٱلْقَا   عِ سِرَاعًا وَٱلْعِيسُ تَهْوِي هَوِيًّا

خَطَرَتْ خَطْرَةٌ عَلَى ٱلْقَلْبِ مِنْ ذِكْرَا   كِ وَهْنًا فَمَا ٱسْتَطَعْتُ مُضِيًّا

قُلْتُ لَبَّيْكِ إِذْ دَعَانِي لَكِ ٱلشَّوْ   قُ وَلِلْحَادِيَيْنِ حُثَّا ٱلْمَطِيَّا

Conjugal Affection.

'Twixt Alka and Balakith we
  On swift white camels borne, were riding;
But memory brought sweet dreams of thee
  My wandering steps and absence chiding.

Nor farther might the wanderer stray,
  Since Love, I cried, forbids to roam,
Quick! Camels on your homeward way!
  The wanderer turns to love and home.

Hamasa, p. 550.

The name of the author of the preceding poem was Abubakr (Ibn Abdurrahman Ibn Almiswar Ibn Makhramat) of Medina, a poet of the family of the Kūraish. He had married Saliha, the daughter of Abu Ubaidah, to whom he was tenderly attached. On one occasion, when on his way to Syria, he was so overcome by his affection for his wife, and by his longings to rejoin her, that he struck his camels on the head, turned them round, and went back to Medina. On this occasion he composed the preceding verses. When his wife heard his verses, and saw that for her sake he had returned to Medina, she was naturally much gratified. She said that of all the objects of her regard he was most dear to her, and that in future she should withhold nothing from

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him. She also made over to him her private property, with which she had not previously allowed him to interfere.

White camels of pure breed were held in high estimation by the Arabs.

The following lines, which are also taken from the Hamasa, p. 803, may remind us of the English proverb which tells us that when "Poverty comes in at the door Love flies out at the window":

وَقَالَ آخَرُ

أَنِخْ فَٱصْطَبِحْ قُرْصًا إِذَا ٱعْتَادَكَ ٱلْهَوَى
بِزَيْتٍ كَمَا يَكْفِيكَ فَقْدَ ٱلْحَبَائِبِ
إِذَا ٱجْتَمَعَ ٱلْجُوعُ ٱلْمُبَرِّحُ وَٱلْهَوَى
نَسِيتَ وِصَالَ ٱلْآنِسَاتِ ٱلْكَوَاعِبِ

Translation.

Bid camel stoop, descend, and dip,
If love torment thee, bread
Or cake in oil, 'twill serve thee in
The absent fair one's stead.
When hunger is with love combined,
Though love its tale be telling,
The lov'd one thou wilt soon forget,
And breasts in beauty swelling.

Latine redditum.

Siste et panem oleo descendens unge, levamen
Cordis, si miserum cor nimis angit amor.
Flamma gulæ simul ac desævit et ardor edendi,
Cedit amor stomacho, cedit et alma Venus.

En Français.

Si tu n'as pas l'objet que l'amour cherche en vain,
Descends de ton chameau, mouille de l'huile un pain,
Ayant peur de la faim, qu'il voit à sa poursuite,
L'amour fait le poltron, et se sauve bien vite.

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Love and Hunger.

إِذَا ٱجْتَمَعَ ٱلْجُوعُ ٱلْمُبَرِّحُ وَٱلْهَوَى   عَلَى ٱلرَّجُلِ ٱلْمِسْكِينِ كَادَ يَمُوتُ

When o'er one luckless wight love and hunger bear sway,
Death slips in close behind them and clutches his prey.

Hamasa, p. 805.

On the Rose.

مُحَبَّتُكُمْ كَٱلْوَرْدِ لَوْنًا وَرِيحَةً   وَعَمَّا قَلِيلٍ تَنْقَضِي مُدَّةُ ٱلْوَرْدِ
وَحُبِّي لَكُمْ كَٱلْآسِ فِي ٱللَّوْنِ وَٱلْبَقَا   مُقِيمٌ عَلَى ٱلْحَالَيْنِ فِي ٱلْحَرِّ وَٱلْبَرْدِ

Grangeret de la Grange, Anthologie Arabe, p. 130.

Translation.

Thy love is as the scent of blushing rose,
A few brief hours its life of sweetness close;
My love for thee is as the myrtle's sheen,
Through heat and cold it lives for ever green.

'Εν τῇ 'Ελληνικῇ γλώσσῃ

Σὸν μὲν ἔρωτα ῥόδοις εἰκάζω Κύπριδος ἀβροῖς,
Τῶν δὲ ῥόδων βιότης ὠκύμορος φθινύθει·
Μᾶλλον ἐμὸς μύρτοισιν ἔρως θαλεροῖσιν ἔοικε,
Οὔτε κρύος δεδιὼς χείματος, οὔτ' ἀλέην.

Latine redditum.

Ut rosa cui vitæ spatium breve Fata dederunt
Sic levis in vestro pectore crescit amor;
Noster amor, myrto similis, viget omnibus horis,
Nec solem ardentem aut frigora dura timet.

Auf Deutsch.

Den Rosen deine liebe gleicht,
Die Rosen bald verblüh'n.
Den Myrthen gleich die meinige
Bleibt ewig jung und grün.

En Français.

La rose et sa beauté ne durent qu'un matin,
Tel est de ton amour la vie et le destin!
Mon amour plus constant, plus au myrte semblable,
Ni le froid glacial, ni la chaleur n'accable.

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On the Rose.

أَهْدَى إِلَىَّ ٱلْحَبِيْبُ وَرْدًا وَٱلْوَرْدُ قَدْ حَانَ مُنْتَهَاهُ
فَقُلْتُ لِلْحَاضِرِينَ هَـذَا لَاشَكَّ مِنْ خَدِّهِ جَنَاهُ

Grangeret de la Grange, Anthologie Arabe, p. 120.

Translation.

The season of the roses had gone by,
The loved one with sweet gift, a rose, drew nigh.
The rose's birth-place was not far to seek,
For she had culled it from her blushing cheek.

'Εν τῇ 'Ελληνίκῇ γλώσσῃ.

'Ηλθε ῥόδον προφέρουσα κόρη, δώρημα κράτιστον,
"Ωρα δ' ἐιαρινῶν ὀυκ ἐπανῆλθε ῥόδων·
Θαῦμα δέ μ' οὐκ εἶχεν, θείας γὰρ ἄγαλμα παρειᾶς
Τὸ ῥόδον ἀκμάζει Κύπριδος ἀνθοφόρον.

Latine redditum.

Tempore quo periêre rosæ, quas frigora terrent,
Attulit adveniens cara puella rosam,
In quo flos crevit patuit locus inde, rosæque
Passim in perpulchris enituere genis.

Auf Deutsch.

Die Zeit der Rosen war vorbei mein Liebchen kam und zeigte
Ein Röslein schön, und sich zu mir mit süssem lächeln neigte;
Ich fragte nicht in welchem land die Rose sei geboren,
Die wange zum geburtsort war und wohnsitz auserkoren.

En Français.

La Rose des jardins était déjà flétrie,
Une Rose en cadeau m'apporta ma chérie;
D'où venait ce cadeau, source de mon bonheur?
Je regardais sa joue, et j'y voyais la fleur.

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On a Dove in a Cage.

لَمْ أَنْسَ قَوْلَ ٱلْوُرْقِ وَهْيَ حَبِيْسَةٌ   وَٱلْعَيْشُ مِنْهَا قَدْ أَقَامَ مُنَغَّصَا
قَدْ كُنْتُ أَلْبِسُ مِنْ غُصُوْنٍ اخْضَرَا   فَلَبِسْتُ مِنْهَا بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ مُقَفَّصَا

Grangeret de Lagrange, Anthologie Arabe, p. 134, note p. 180.

Translation.

Poor dove! when near her cage I heard
The tuneful plaint of captive bird:
"These twigs," she cried, "which now to me
As cage-bars bring captivity,
Were branches once whose verdure spread
Its sheltering leaf-world o'er my head."

Latine redditum.

Væ mihi, væ miseræ! tenerâ sic voce columba
Plorabat sylvæ gaudia amissa suæ;
Rami qui nuper gratâ me fronde tegebant,
Clathrorum formas, carceris instar, habent.

En Français.

La colombe disait, étant prisonnière,
"Les rameaux ombrageux qui me couvraient naguère,
En cage recourbés font ma triste prison,
Et bornent de mes jours le lugubre horizon."

Auf Deutsch.

Der Taube die gefangen war einst hört'ich den gesang,
Es lautete ganz kümmerlich der trauervolle klang:
"Die zweige die beschützten mich auf sonnigen gefilden
Einsperren mich, und, mitleidlos, ein vogelbauer bilden."

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[Pt. 2]

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Muâwiya, the sixth Khalif in succession after Muhammad, was the first of the fourteen Khalifs of the family which presided during a period of nearly a century over the destinies of the Saracenic Empire. His father, Àbu-Sufian, was of the tribe of the Kuraish, a tribe to which Muhammad also belonged. Muâwiya and his wife became followers of the Prophet on the same day as that on which the father of the former, who had previously commanded the forces of the enemy, announced his adherence to the new religion. By this conversion Muhammad received a great accession of strength, and was induced, in consideration of its importance, to grant two out of the three requests by which it was accompanied. The first was that Abu-Sufian might take the command of the army of the Faithful against the Infidels. The second, that his son, who afterwards became Khalif, might be appointed Secretary to the Prophet. The third, that Muhammad would vouchsafe to marry the second daughter of Abu-Sufian. The Prophet, however, who complied with the two former of these requests, refused to comply with the latter. Maisun, the Bedouin wife of Muâwiya, was the daughter of Jandal, of the tribe of Kalb. She was a poetess of no mean power, as the poem of which the following is a paraphrase goes far to prove. The original lines are given with some inaccuracy in Carlyle's specimens of Arabian poetry and in Adler's edition of the

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Annals of Abulfeda, the great Arabian historian. There appear to be different readings of these celebrated verses, and I was indebted to Faris Shidiak, the translator of the Bible and Prayer Book into Arabic, for two verses which, he assured me, belong to the poem, though not found in either of the texts referred to. I have not hesitated to incorporate them in the text and in my paraphrase, for they are so completely in the spirit of the others, that I cannot but think they originally formed part of, and ought never to have been separated from, the rest of the poem. They are verses 5 and 6 in the Arabic text.

One day the Khalif chanced to hear his wife singing the verses, which were certainly by no means flattering to him, so he said to her: "Thou wast not content, O daughter of Jandal, until thou hadst called me a fat donkey. Get thee to thy family! *Elhaki biahliki* (literally, join thy family)." This was one of the forms of Mussulman divorce, and Maisun was divorced accordingly. So she went back to her desert and rejoined the Bani Kalb, and her son Yazid, who afterwards became Khalif, went with her.

قَالَتْ مَيْسُونُ بِنْتُ جَنْدَلَ ٱلْفَزَارِيَّةُ

لَلُبْسُ عَبَاءَةٍ وَتَقَرَّ عَيْنِى   أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ لُبْسِ ٱلشُّفُوفِ

وَبَيْتٌ تَخْفِقُ ٱلْأَرْوَاحُ فِيْهِ   أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ قَصْرٍ مُنِيْفِ

وَبَكْرٌ يَتْبَعُ ٱلْأَظْعَانَ صَعْبٌ   أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ بَغْلٍ زَفُوْفِ

وَكَلْبٌ يَنْبَحُ ٱلْأَضْيَافَ دُوْنِي   أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ هِرٍّ أَلُوفِ

وَأَكْلُ كُسَيْرَةٍ فِي كِسْرِ بَيْتٍ   أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ أَكْلِ ٱلرَّغِيْفِ

وَأَصْوَاتُ ٱلرِّيَاحِ بِكُلِّ فَجٍّ   أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ نَقْرِ ٱلدُّفُوْفِ

وَخِرْقٌ مِنْ بَنِي عَمِّي نَحِيْفٌ   أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ عِلْجٍ عَلِيْفِ

فَقَالَ مُعَاوِيَةُ مَارَضِيْتِ يَا ٱبْنَةَ جَنْدَلَ حَتَّي جَعَلْتِنِي عِلْجًا عَلِيْفًا إِلْحَقِي بِأَهْلِكِ فَمَضَتْ إِلَى بَادِيَةِ بَنِى كَلْبٍ وَيَزِيْدُ مَعَهَا ⁘

Paraphrase.

The Lament of Maisun, the Bedouin wife of Muâwiya.

I give thee all the treacherous brightness
  Of glittering robes which grace the fair,
Then give me back my young heart's lightness
  And simple vest of Camel's hair.
The tent on which free winds are beating
  Is dearer to the Desert's child
Than Palaces and kingly greeting—
  O bear me to my desert wild!
More dear than swift mule softly treading,
  While gentlest hands his speed control,
Are camels rough their lone way threading
  Where caravans through deserts roll.
On couch of silken ease reclining
  I watch the kitten's sportive play,
But feel the while my young heart pining
  For desert guests and watch-dog's bay.
The frugal desert's banquet slender,
  The simple crust which tents afford,
Are dearer than the courtly splendour
  And sweets which grace a monarch's board.
And dearer far the voices pealing
  From winds which sweep the desert round
Than Pomp and Power their pride revealing
  In noisy timbrel's measur'd sound.
Then bear me far from kingly dwelling,
  From Luxury's cold and pamper'd child,
To seek a heart with freedom swelling,
  A kindred heart in deserts wild.

Note.—Mr. Sabunjie informs me that in the Kamus, published at Beyrout under the auspices of competent Muhammadan and Christian scholars, and approved by the 'Ulamá of the Azhar at Cairo, the name of the father of Maisun is given as Jandal and not Bahdal, which latter is the name given by some of the earlier authorities. Jandal is also the name given in Lane's Arabic Dictionary.

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مُفَدَّاةٌ مُكَرَّمَةٌ عَلَيْنَا يُجَاعُ لَهَا ٱلْعِيَالُ وَلَا تُجَاعُ
سَلِيلَةُ سَابِقَيْنِ تَنَاجَلَاهَا إِذَا نُسِبَا يَضُمُّهُمَا ٱلْكُرَاعُ
فَلَا تَطْمَعْ أَبَيْتَ ٱللَّعْنَ فِيهَا وَمَنْعُكَهَا بِشَيْءٍ يُسْتَطَاعُ

Blessings on thee![2] costliest treasure
Of our home Sakâb we hold;
Jewel without price or measure,
Never to be lent or sold.

[1] See an interesting account of the breeds of Arabian horses by Mr. Palgrave in the Encyclopædia Britannica.

[2] Literally, let not imprecations be uttered against thee. Freytag mentions in a note that this form of addressing kings was only used in times preceding Muhammad. Ne dira tibi precentur! Gott schutze dich! Rückert.

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With our all we would redeem her,
And our children fasting go,[1]
That Sakâb—we so esteem her—
May not thirst or hunger know.

They from whom Sakâb descended
Shone victorious in the race;
We their noble lineage blended
In the far-famed Kurah trace.

Blessings on thee! may'st thou never
From us wrest our trusty friend!
We have loved her, and will ever
To our dying hour defend.[2]

I am tempted, in illustration of the foregoing poem, and of those feelings of attachment which the Arabian breed of horses seems formed by nature to call forth, to refer to an interesting anecdote in the life of a distinguished Indian officer. In "My Indian Journal," a work published in 1864 by Colonel Walter Campbell, and abounding in graphic sketches of Indian sport and life, he refers, in a few spirited and graceful words, to his favourite little Arab horse, called Turquoise, to whose instinctive qualities he pays a touching tribute in prose (p. 289). To that suggestive tribute and its natural associations I have endeavoured to give expression in the following stanzas—

TURQUOISE.

My Arab steed, my Arab steed,
A trusty steed is he;
With winged wind he shares its speed,
And shares my sport with me.

[1] When Arab men gave camel's milk to a horse, it is said to have caused frequently a little domestic disturbance, as the Arab mothers did not like to see their children robbed of even a portion of their meal for the sake of a quadruped.
[2] Literally, to prevent you from taking her from us will to us be possible.

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When pitiless the rain descends,
  Within my tent he sleeps;
His rug he to his master lends,
  And faithful vigil keeps.

So light his sleep, no watch-dog e'er
  Kept surer watch than he;
Each voice that stirs the midnight air
  He catches wistfully.

He wakes me if he hears the drum
  Or morning's bugle sound;
If stranger to my camp-tent come,
  A guardian there is found.

He sleeps beside me peacefully;
  He serves my every need;
A comrade near and dear to me
  Is that fleet Arab steed.

I had hoped to find some Arabic poem illustrative of the life and character of the Bedouins, in which, relatively to his services in battle, as well as in the predatory excursions of his master, the Arab steed might naturally be expected to play no unimportant part. I was, however, only able to find a brief Bedouin fragment, which I have embodied in the two first stanzas of the following poem, while trusting to my imagination for filling up the no doubt imperfect sketch.

The Lay of the Bedouin.

Ye children of the City,
  Soft sons of Luxury,
Of a manly race the dwelling
  Is the Desert wild and free.

To us the swift horse flying
  Impetuous to the goal,
Or in battle bravely dying—
  To you the ass's foal.

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Unmatch'd in power and beauty
  Is the steed of the Bedouin,
Not a cloud or a hoof-print telleth
  Where his arrowy race hath been ;

With his courage tried in battle,
  And his limbs inur'd to toil,
Where the red flood round him floweth,
  He bears us on to spoil.

Bright rays are o'er him beaming
  From the steel of the quiv'ring lance ;
But a nobler light is streaming
  From his eyeballs' fiery glance.

When he champs the bit, the foam-flakes
  Fly around him, thick and fast,
Like the snows in their drifted whiteness
  On the wings of the mountain blast ;

And the phrenzy of his nostrils,
  And the snortings of his rage,
Are a terror gathering o'er him
  Where the swords with swords engage.

To you the couch of splendour
  And the garden's bower of green ;
But the desert and its dangers
  For the fearless Bedouin.

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[illegible]

Unm[illegible] power and [illegible]
In the land of the Norsemen,
Stood aloof at a foot-print [illegible]
Where the strong men [illegible];

With his [illegible] back,
[illegible] to [illegible],
Where the red blood would run through,
He began as on to speak.

Bright rays are [illegible] beaming,
From the [illegible] of the quivering blade,
But a [illegible] light is streaming
From his eyelids [illegible] glance.

When he [illegible] the mountains
[illegible] long, [illegible] and [illegible],
Like the [illegible] in their [illegible]
On the wings of the [illegible];

And the [illegible] of his [illegible],
And the [illegible] of [illegible],
All a [illegible] o'er [illegible]
Where the [illegible] with [illegible],

To see the earth [illegible]
And the [illegible] of [illegible]
Let the [illegible]
For the [illegible].

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